

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7178

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY QUITO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, VE

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER LEAVES DOOR AJAR FOR VENEZUELA TO ATTEND
BUENOS AIRES MFM

REF: CARACAS 137 AND 119

1. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH EL NACIONAL PUBLISHED JANUARY 8, FOREIGN MINISTER SCHACHT IS QUOTED AS STATING THAT THE SUGGESTION FOR AN OAS COUNCIL MEETING TO DISCUSS THE U.S. TRADE LAW ORIGINATED WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ' JANUARY 4 MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ LARA OF ECUADOR. ASKED IF VENEZUELA WILL ATTEND THE BUENOS AIRES MFM SCHEDULED FOR MARCH AND WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF THE OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, SCHACHT REPORTEDLY REPLIED, "VENEZUELA'S POSITION HAS ALREADY BEEN EXPRESSED AND IS WELL KNOWN IN THE SENSE THAT THE ACTIONS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT CONTRADICT THE OBJECTIVES ENUNCIATED BY MR. KISSINGER AT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS AT TLATELOLCO AND WASHINGTON. ON THE OTHER HAND THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT IF THE FRAMEWORK OF THE OAS DOES EXIST, IT SHOULD BE WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK WHERE SUCH CONVERSATIONS TAKE PLACE. AS FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE QUESTION, OTHER COUNTRIES OF AMERICA HAVE EXPRESSED THE SAME POINT OF VIEW, PARTICULARLY ECUADOR. IT IS CLEAR THAT ATTENDANCE OR NON-ATTENDANCE

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AT BUENOS AIRES WOULD IN ANY CASE BE CONDITIONED UPON THE EVOLUTION

OF THE ATTITUDE OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WITH RESPECT TO ITS
RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA."

2. COMMENT: SCHACHT'S COMMENTS, APPARENTLY MADE BEFORE THE
SECRETARY'S JANUARY 7 STATEMENT ON THE TRADE LAW BECAME KNOWN
HERE, WOULD SEEM TO LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN FOR VENEZUELA TO ATTEND
THE BUENOS AIRES MEETING IN MARCH. IF SO, SCHACHT'S LATEST
REMARKS REPRESENT A BACK-PEDALING FROM HIS JANUARY 5 STATEMENT
QUOTED IN THE PRESS THAT "VENEZUELA IS DISPOSED NOT TO ATTEND THE
BUENOS AIRES MEETING..." (CARACAS 137, PARA 2). AS THE
DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, NOWHERE IN PRESIDENT PEREZ' JANUARY 4 TELEGRAM
TO THE PRESIDENT OF ECUADOR CALLING FOR AN OAS COUNCIL MEETING
TO DEBATE THE U.S. TRADE LAW DID PEREZ FLATLY STATE THAT VENEZUELA
WOULD NOT ATTEND THE BUENOS AIRES MFM. IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE
GOV IS BEING CAREFUL TO PRESERVE AS MUCH FLEXIBILITY AS POSSIBLE
IN DEALING WITH THE U.S. BY KEEPING OPEN ITS OPTIONS REGARDING
THE BUENOS AIRES MEETING.
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